States and Central Ministries, appointment of Nodal Officers for the States and regular review of projects etc. Details of the commitment charges paid are as follows:

(Figures in Rs. crore)

Development partner	2004-05
Germany	2.07
France	0.00
Asian Development Bank	45.10
IBRD	36.12
IDA	81.82
TOTAL :	165.11

Opening of more LIC branches

3217. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to set up more LIC branches in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether there is a proposal to set up more satellite branches in the country; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. Opening of Satellite Offices is an on going process and the Satellite Offices are opened keeping in view, *inter alia,* following parameters:

1. Geographical limits of the area in which the branch operates.
2. No. of Policies that are being serviced by the branch.
3. No. of Development Officers attached with the branch.
4. No. of Agents attached with the branch.

5. Dispersal of agency force and Development Officers.

6. Places with concentration of High Networth Individuals.

7. New townships in view of the growth in residential, industrial and commercial complexes.

8. Suburban areas of Metros where there has been substantial growth of Middle class population and insurance potential.

As on date, 25 satellite offices have been opened so far.

Easwaran Committee Report on Tax reforms

3218. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the recommendations contained in the Easwaran Committee report on Tax reforms has been implemented;

(b) if so, in which Tax Acts these have been reflected; and

(c) whether it has resulted in real simplification of the filing of Tax Returns as the Saral (Simple) Income Tax return is still complicated to fill in?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) to (c) There is no institutional memory of any 'Easwaran Committee' on tax reforms. It appears that this Question is based on an article titled "Put Finance Ministry on reforms path" by Shri N. K. Singh, former Revenue Secretary published in 'Indian Express' on 04.09.2005. On perusal of the article, it appears that Shri Singh is actually referring to the Committee constituted in 1996 to re-write the Income-tax Act with a view to simplifying it. However, the draft of the Income-tax Act submitted by the Committee could not be introduced in the Parliament.

The Government has again constituted an Expert Group in July, 2005 to prepare a draft for simplified Income-tax Code. The recommendations of the Committee appointed in 1996 are also being considered by the Expert Group in the new draft. The Group is expected to submit its report shortly.